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The following memorandum on Salvadoran political groups was prepared before the Salvadoran coup d'etat of 14 December at the request of the Nicaraguan Revolutionary Group, in particular the Patriotic Nicaraguan Committee located in Guatemala. The Nicaraguans instructed one of their Salvadoran contacts to obtain information on the subject, and he in turn commissioned Dr. Romero Hernandez, a lawyer involved in previous revolutionary activities, to prepare the report. Although outdated by the turn of events, the memorandum is presented because of its origin and its analysis of Salvadoran political forces, including the group now in power.

MEMORANDUM ON THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION  
IN EL SALVADOR

1 December 1948

1. The Army. The Army is divided into two groups: a) The top level chiefs together with the officials who have come up from the ranks; b) The young officers of the military school--mostly young colonels, majors, and captains.

2. The first group is headed by Generals Santiago and Felipe Ayala, Colonel Rudesindo Monterrosa, Colonel Ferman, and General Gustavo Lopez. Colonel Carlos Flores, Director of Police, does not belong to this group. This group is the basis of Colonel Osmin Aguirre's pretension to come into power. He has contact with them through General Jose Tomas Calderon and they tried to stage a coup d'etat three years ago which failed because of the ambitions of the political group then headed by Dr. Max Brannon. In spite of the fact that they now appear to have gone over to General Espinola Castro, they have always entertained the idea that Osmin Aguirre would return to occupy the Presidency. This was in fact agreed to among these officials and General Castaneda at the beginning of the latter's term, but differences between Castaneda's wife and Aguirre's wife led to the breaking of this agreement. However, at the heart of this military group there still lies the desire to keep their word with Aguirre. They are men of action although ignorant of political and social culture. They have a certain creed of loyalty toward the established government, no matter what kind it may be, but if at any

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moment Castaneda cannot control the situation they would not hesitate to turn the power over to Osmin Aguirre.

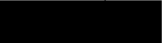
b. The group of young officers is composed of the most outstanding military youth in the country, principally Major Oscar Osorio, Major Oscar Dolanos, Major Marco Antonio Molina, Major Manuel Cordoba, Major José Maria Lemus, Colonel Fidel Quintanilla, Major Jesus Rodriguez, Major Mauro Bermudez, Captain Rafael Carranza Amaya, Captain Armando Harrison, Captain Fernando Castillo Navarrete, etc. Since the beginning of the Castaneda Administration these men have hoped to control the government in the old Prussian style. When they tried to tie Castaneda's hands on 22 June 1945, the attitude of two officers from the ranks, Colonel Dario Flores and Fernando Solorzano, upset their ambitions. In spite of this nearly all of them have continued to hold important jobs in the Army which would give them the opportunity to dominate Castaneda or throw him out, but owing to their lack of valor they have continued to fail. This group maintains constant relations with Major Oscar Osorio in Mexico, who in turn because of economic necessity is mixed up with Colonel Arturo Castellanos. Young officials continue to be faithful to the idea of bringing to power a military coup d'etat headed by Osorio. They are continually holding meetings to try to organize such a movement. Recently it has been apparent that they are plotting another coup because they have ceased to show themselves together in public. They talk to no one and their attitude indicates that they are cooking up something very soon.

2. The Workers. The workers are divided into two sections--the organized and the unorganized. Those who are organized are mostly guided by persons of Marxist ideas and a great number of these have decided to support the official candidate, General Espinola, although there are a number of outstanding Marxists who are with Colonel Menendez. The unorganized workers are for the most part not active. Those who are are with Menendez.
3. The Students. A small sector of the students are with Menendez, but the majority are in the party without a candidate called Partido de Orientación Democrática. It is influenced by Dr. Carlos Llerena, Director of the University. Their plan seems to be to sabotage the candidacy of Menendez and hope that none of the present candidates is successful so that a dark horse may arise from their own ranks.
4. Capital. Capital is represented in the party of Osmin Aguirre by General José Tomás Calderon, who is a kind of delegate of the stronger capitalists of the country that have so far not supported any of the parties. The official party of General Espinola is financed by official funds. Practically the only capitalist in it is Ricardo Kriete.
5. The Way to Develop a Revolutionary Plan. El Salvador presents great problems for a revolution. Its geographic characteristics, the density of its population, its network of roads, make it necessary that any coup triumph within twenty-four to forty-eight hours. Naturally any successful coup must have military backing. The top level chiefs cannot be counted on, so the only possibility is with the young officers. Unfortunately the civilians are mostly at odds with the young officers who have spent at least 600,000 colones of civilian money planning military coups without getting anywhere. There is only one person who can unite the young officers and the civilians. He is Major Oscar Osorio. He has the personality of a conceited mystic, and is very ambitious for power. His original ideology was Fascist, but it is probable that his long stay in Mexico and his youthful flexibility have changed him somewhat. He has his scruples and therefore the proposition would have to be put to him with considerable tact. I believe that the person who makes this contact should first discuss the matter with Colonel Arturo Castellanos.

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who is a person of easy comprehension and who has had understandings with Osorio for a long time. Colonel Castellanos has also discussed such matters with President Arevalo, who offered him assistance, so therefore there is a possibility of an understanding here in combination with the revolutionary movements in Honduras and Nicaragua. Osorio has direct contact through the rail with the young officers in El Salvador, and he writes his letters in code. To try to arm a strong group inside El Salvador is highly difficult, particularly if the weapons have to be bought in El Salvador. The police and officials of the National Guard always work with the various commission men to dispose of the armaments which they confiscate, and for this reason they would quickly get wise if the demand for weapons and ammunition should increase for no apparent cause. It would be better to try to introduce arms from the exterior, probably through the Bay of Jiquilisco, by means of persons who are already known and can handle this. I would also counsel that a civilian group be armed in order to balance the power of the military.

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